Philosophy 512 Spring 2015
Seminar in Philosophy of Mind:
Self-Knowledge and Awareness of Self
Syllabus (revised 3/20)

Professor: Charles Siewert
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DESCRIPTION. In this seminar we will examine a number of leading proposals for how to account for *self-knowledge*—more specifically: attempts to explain *how one knows one's own mind*, and *how one is aware of oneself*. Among the questions we will discuss:

- In what sense, if any, are you "directly acquainted" with your own states of mind?
- In what way, if any, is self-knowledge perceptual?
- How, if at all, is self-knowledge essentially bound up with your status as a rational being?
- What is the scope and strength of this kind of knowledge?
- Are you aware of yourself in some special way no one else is, or can be?
- Do our answers here have important implications for how we should conceive of and investigate: *consciousness*, the *mind*, or the *self*?

To provide a background and framework for discussing these questions, we will read Brie Gertler's survey of contemporary views, *Self-Knowledge* (Routledge 2011), keyed to articles and book excerpts.

REQUIREMENTS

Readings and Participation:

- Students should be prepared to discuss the readings slated for discussion each week prior to our meeting (as indicated below under "Topics and Readings"). Readings will be posted on Owlspace.

Assignments:

- Starting with the second meeting, each student registered for the course is required to submit a short "reading response" on the material to be discussed that week. The response is to be submitted electronically to Prof. Siewert by Tuesday evening before the meeting that week.

- Each registered student is required to initiate and lead a discussion on the readings for one meeting.

- Each registered student is required to submit either two shorter (7-10 page) or one longer (approximately 15-20 page) paper, due at the end of term, on topics or a topic to be decided in consultation with Prof. Siewert.

TOPICS AND READINGS

Meeting #1: 1/14. Introduction and background; the scope of special self-knowledge. Gertler, Chs 1-3.

Meeting #2: 1/21. The (un)reliability of introspection; its legitimate uses, philosophical and otherwise. Readings: Schwitzgebel, "The Unreliability of Naïve Introspection," Siewert, "For Analytic Phenomenology," Kriegel, "Introduction to *Varieties of Consciousness* (pp. 21-39); Wilson and Dunn, "Self-Knowledge: its Limits, Value, and Potential for Improvement."

Meeting #3: 1/28. Self-knowledge as "acquaintance." Readings: Gertler, Ch. 4., "The Acquaintance Theory of Self-Knowledge"; Fumerton, "Speckled Hens and Objects of Acquaintance"; Gertler, "Renewed Acquaintance."

Meeting #4: 2/4. Self-knowledge and "inner sense". Readings: Gertler, Ch. 5, "The Inner Sense Theory of Self-Knowledge"; from Lycan, "The Superiority of HOP…" and "Dretske's Ways of Introspecting".

Meeting #5: 2/11. Siewert's critique of inner sense, and his alternative: "reflective critical attention". Readings: "On the Phenomenology of Introspection" and "Speaking Up" (pp.208-211)

Meeting #6: 2/18. "Rationalist" theories of self-knowledge. Gertler, Ch. 6. Reading from Burge, "Our Entitlement to Self-Knowledge."

Meeting #7: 2/25. Moran's "rationalism": self-knowledge and self-constitution. Reading from Moran's *Authority and Estrangement*, pp.36-151.

2/28-3/8 SPRING BREAK

Meeting #8: 3/11. "Transparency" and self-knowledge. Readings from Byrne ("Introspection" and Moran "Self-Knowledge, 'Transparency', and Forms of Activity".

Meeting #9: 3/18. Cassam on self-knowledge. Readings from Cassam's *Self-Knowledge for Humans* Chs 1-4 (pp. 1-50), Chs 11-13 (pp. 137-187)

Meeting #10: 3/25. Awareness of the self: an "introspectionist account." Gertler, Ch. 7. Reading from Howell, "Self-Knowledge and Self-Reference".

Meeting #11: 4/1. Kantian approaches to awareness of self. Readings: Brook, "Kant: a Unified Representational Basis for All Consciousness" and Korsgaard, "Personal Identity and the Unity of Agency.**"**

Meeting #12: 4/8. A "rational agency" account. Readings from O'Brien's *Self-Knowing Agents*, pp. vii, 3-14, 74-124.

Meeting #13: 4/15 A phenomenological account of self-awareness. Readings from Zahavi's *Self and Other.*

Meeting #14: 4/22 Looking back and summing up. Gertler's view of the territory (empiricist vs. rationalist theories of self-knowledge). Gertler, Ch. 8. Siewert's "Subjectivity and Self-Understanding"—a prospectus.